

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An optical pickup for reading an information signal by emitting a light beam to an information recording surface
5 of a recording medium having a recording track composed of information pits arranged for recording the information signal, comprising:

a light source which emits the light beam having linear polarization;

10 an optical system which guides the emitted light beam to the information recording surface and further guides light that is emitted from the information recording surface based on the guided light beam, to an optical path different from an optical path to the light source; and

15 a light-receiving device which receives the light guided by the optical system from the information recording surface,

wherein the optical system controls a polarization direction of the emitted light beam, with respect to a direction
20 of the recording track.

2. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system changes the polarization direction so that an angle in the polarization direction is close to 45° with respect
25 to the direction of the recording track, as compared with the case where the optical system changes no polarization direction.

3. The optical pickup according to claim 2, wherein the optical system changes the polarization direction so that the angle is set at 30° to 60°.

5

4. The optical pickup according to claim 3, wherein the optical system changes the polarization direction so that the angle is set at 45°.

10 5. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system comprises a semitransparent semireflecting mirror which reflects the emitted light beam, guides the light beam to the information recording surface after changing the polarization direction upon reflection, transmits the light
15 from the information recording surface, and guides the light to the light-receiving device of the optical pickup.

20 6. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system includes a reflection mirror which reflects the emitted light beam and changes the polarization direction upon reflection.

25 7. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system includes a grating which diffracts the emitted light beam and changes the polarization direction upon diffraction.

8. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system includes a glass plate with a predetermined thickness, the glass plate transmitting the emitted light beam and changing the polarization direction upon transmission.

5

9. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the optical system includes a polarizing plate which transmits the emitted light beam and changes the polarization direction upon transmission.

10

10. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the light source emits the light beam so that flux of light is elliptical in cross section and is shaped like an ellipse having a major axis orthogonally to the polarization direction.

15

11. The optical pickup according to claim 1, wherein the light source composes of a semiconductor laser; and

the optical system controls a polarization direction
20 regarding a major component of the emitted light beam.

12. An information reproducing apparatus, comprising:
the optical pickup according to claim 1, and
a reproducing device which reproduces recorded
25 information corresponding to the information signal based on
a detection output of the light-receiving device of the optical
pickup.